

24. April 2022

## Preparing the Bride for the Bridegroom

Rev 1:9-11a.12-13.17-19

*I, John, your brother and partner in hardships, in the kingdom and in perseverance in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos on account of the Word of God and of witness to Jesus; it was the Lord's Day and I was in ecstasy, and I heard a loud voice behind me, like the sound of a trumpet, saying, 'Write down in a book all that you see, and send it to the seven churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. I turned round to see who was speaking to me, and when I turned I saw seven golden lamp-stands and, in the middle of them, one like a Son of man, dressed in a long robe tied at the waist with a belt of gold. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead, but he laid his right hand on me and said, 'Do not be afraid; it is I, the First and the Last; I am the Living One, I was dead and look - I am alive for ever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and of Hades. Now write down all that you see of present happenings and what is still to come.*

On this Sunday, many aspects converge that are of great importance in the life of Catholics. On the one hand, it is the day on which the Octave of the Resurrection of Our Lord concludes. On the other hand, it is Divine Mercy Sunday, which has its origin in the revelations to Sister Faustina Kowalska. Our small Agnus Dei community also celebrates today the forty-second anniversary of its foundation.

The first thing we should always do is to thank the Lord for His goodness and to praise him. What would become of our life if we did not know him? We would lack the essentials, that is, the love that created us, redeemed us and will bring His work in us to completion. We would not have the One who says to us: *"Do not be afraid; it is I, the First and the Last; I am the Living One, I was dead and look - I am alive for ever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and of Hades."*

This gratitude and praise of God should be especially present when one has been called to serve Him in a religious community and to centre one's whole life on Him. Since I - Brother Elias - received the grace from God to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in the foundation of this community, I would like to pass on some of the approaches of the spirituality of Agnus Dei to all the people who listen to my daily meditations and the sacred songs of Harpa Dei. In this way, they can get to know us a little better.

If I had to summarise in a few words what the main aspect of the ministry of our community is, I would answer the same as I said several years ago to a priest who asked me: "We want to help prepare the Bride for the Bridegroom".

From this perspective, all our activities take on their deepest meaning. Among them, the first to be mentioned is contemplation, which consists in deepening daily our love for God and becoming more and more receptive to His love. In our Mother House - the Frauenberg Monastery in Germany - we have been practising Perpetual Adoration since 11 February 1985. From the crypt of the monastery, day and night someone is praying for the Church and the world - The Lord will meet us vigilant when He comes (cf. Lk 12:38)!

In recent years we have discovered the extraordinary form of the Roman rite, the Tridentine Mass, and since then our love for the holy liturgy has deepened.

Contemplation goes hand in hand with the spiritual path we seek to walk inwardly. We call it the "Way of the Lamb".

From here, a fruitful apostolate in the proclamation of the Word and in sacred song is born. Many people turn to us for advice in spiritual and pastoral matters.

In addition to this, our community carries out charitable works, especially in the area of the protection of life. In Africa we have a small foundation, where we care for children who were orphaned after the war in Congo in 2000.

Also noteworthy is the presence of a sister from our community in Jerusalem, who has the mission to pray in the holy places for the world and the Church. Before the coronavirus plague, we used to offer "itinerant exercises" for pilgrims in the Holy Land.

Since, after having received the grace of conversion, the Lord led me to the Catholic Church - into which I entered with conviction - I have to look carefully at the direction she is taking today. Unfortunately, we see many things that, from our point of view, overshadow the beauty of the Bride of Christ. We try to counteract these tendencies and bring out her true beauty.

If you wish, you can listen to my testimony of conversion at the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5p0TVxYEHLw>

We were never a large community, nor are we now. But we live in peace, grateful to the Lord that we all have the same feeling and a common vision of the situation in the Church and in the world, to respond to it...

The awareness of Christ's return is our first motivation to do everything in our power so that the Gospel may be proclaimed everywhere.

*When the Son of man comes, will He find any faith on earth?' (Lk 18:8)* Are we, the faithful, aware that this Son of Man, "*dressed in a long robe tied at the waist with a belt of gold*", will return in His glory at the End of Time, as the angels announced on the day of the Ascension in Jerusalem (Acts 1:11)? We know neither the day nor the hour (Mt 24:36), but there is no doubt that the Second Coming of the Lord is drawing nearer every day.

Is the Church sufficiently prepared, is she announcing the Gospel with authority and calling men to conversion, both Jews and Gentiles, is the salvation of souls still the primary and unequivocal goal of the mission, or is too much emphasis being placed on intra-worldly affairs, so that the burning zeal for the glorification of God, for the following of Christ and for His holy Church is diminished?

A lukewarm Church cannot stand before the returning Lord (cf. Rev 3.16). A Church that is more occupied with the problems of this world than with the primary thing entrusted to her, fades and will hardly be able to resist the attraction of the anti-Christian powers.

May the Lord grant that our little community may faithfully fulfil the mission entrusted to us and never deny Him! We ask all of you to pray for us in this regard. Thank you!